REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

I. Introduction

Claims 1-18 are pending in the application.

Claims 1-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Curtis et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,896,531 (hereinafter "Curtis").

Claims 1, 8 and 15 have been amended to make clear that the software profiles recited therein include parameters that are indicative of an instance of an associated file. Support for this amendment can be found throughout the specification, and drawings, for example, in paragraphs 26, 41 and 42 of the corresponding published application (Application No. U.S. 20010047381 A1, published November 19, 2001).

Reconsideration of this application in light of the amendments above and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

II. Applicants' Reply to the Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Curtis. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection in view of the amendments to the claims and the following discussion.

One aspect of applicants' invention is concerned with the efficient storage and retrieval of software files from a memory or storage media. A feature that facilitates this function is the creation and use of software profiles, which, among other things, include certain parameters associated with an instance of a software file. Such software profiles may include parameters that describe or define certain attributes such as settings or user preferences used in an instance of that software file. For example, a user may retrieve from memory a Microsoft Word document having certain settings or parameters that were specified the last time that document was edited (e.g., in the previous instance). Such parameters may include, for example, spell check preferences, zoom settings, toolbar preferences etc. The software profiles as described in the present application retain these parameters so that a when the Word document is subsequently retrieved, the profile is also retrieved and these parameters are automatically loaded prior to or in parallel with the file itself, relieving the user from the burden of having to recustomize or

reformat the document. This capability represents a distinction over the static application support modules discussed in Curtis, as explained below.

Another aspect of the invention relates to the efficient storage and retrieval of the software profiles and associated files. Applicants teach that the software profile and the file itself may be stored in different locations and retrieved concurrently or substantially concurrently (shown in FIGS. 1 and 2 and discussed in paragraph 26 of the present application). One benefit of this approach is that it allows the software profile to be retrieved and loaded substantially concurrently with the file, so that the profile may restore the previous user settings and/or customize the application program while the file itself is being loaded in the application. This reduces the overall time required to retrieve and load a file from memory that would normally be associated with the sequential performance of these tasks (and any necessary manual recustomization that may be required). Such software profiles may be created and used for any type of stored data such as word processor documents, database information, a graphics design program, a web browser, or any other type of stored data file that includes file specific settings or parameters.

Curtis, on the other hand, does not show or suggest these innovative features. Rather, Curtis discusses a software management system that monitors the resources used by multiple active software applications to determine whether those resources may be reused to a support a new application. The purpose of the system in Curtis is to prevent the unnecessary duplication of software modules or environments common to different applications. Curtis explains that the benefit of linking to active resources rather than creating new ones is that it reduces the initialization time associated with launching a new application and thereby improves overall processing efficiency (Curtis, col. 1, lines 10-15 and lines 50 to column 2, line 2).

This point illustrated in FIGS. 4 and 5 of Curtis. As shown in FIG. 4, steps 402 and 404 seek to determine whether a common software module can be reused (in this case, an OME or Object Management Environment). If the OME can be reused (step 406), a link is created connecting the OME to the specific task to be accomplished (steps 408 and 410). This allows the system to skip the step or creating a new OME and thereby reduce initialization time. If the OME cannot be reused, and new one is started at

step 420 (also see Curtis column 6, lines 29-63). The flow charts shown in FIGS. 5A and 5B contain similar steps (for FIG. 5A, steps 436-453 and for FIG. 5B, steps 462-476).

Thus, the system of Curtis reduces initialization time by linking to active OME modules instead of reloading additional unneeded OME modules. Applicants' claimed invention, however, provides the benefit of potentially reducing file retrieval time by preloading application preferences from an instance of the file. Nowhere in Curtis is such a feature shown or suggested. Moreover, the OME modules used by Curtis are merely standard application support environments that do not contain any information related to a prior instance of the OME or to any preferences specified in a file instance. In fact, the system of Curtis contains no mechanism or process whatsoever for retaining information relating to a previous instance of a software file, nor does it recognize the desirability of doing so. Consequently, the system of Curtis is completely incapable of retaining or reconstituting information relating to past file instances. Accordingly, applicants respectfully submit that this case, including independent claims 1, 8 and 15, as amended, are allowable over Curtis.

III. Conclusion

The foregoing demonstrates that claims 1-18 are allowable. Reconsideration and a favorable action are accordingly respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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